

SUSAN M. SESSFORD.

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MAY 4, 1898.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

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Mr. SULLOWAY, from the Committee on Invalid Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany S. 1090.]

The Committee on Invalid Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (S. 1090) granting a pension to Susan M. Sessford, have examined the same and the evidence relating thereto and respectfully report:

This bill proposes to pension, at \$10 per month, Susan M. Sessford, of Washington, D. C.

The Senate report states the facts, and is as follows:

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (S. 1090) granting a pension to Susan M. Sessford, have examined the same, and report:

A similar bill was introduced in the Senate during the Fifty-fourth Congress, passed the Senate, and was reported favorably by the House.

The Senate report was as follows, which your committee adopt, and recommend the passage of the bill:

Thomas J. Martin served in Company D, Second Battalion, District of Columbia Infantry, and drew a pension (certificate No. 599845). Immediately after his discharge from the Army Mr. Martin was employed in the Government blacksmith shop on the White House Lot, at \$18 a week. While repairing the Government smallpox ambulance he contracted that disease in an aggravated form, and his illness, combined with his military service, affected his physical strength during the remaining years of his life. From the date of his discharge he was a sufferer with severe pains in his head, which were intensified by the smallpox, and this disability is believed to have been the predisposing cause of his death from sunstroke.

The fact that Mrs. Sessford was supported by her son is established by the following affidavit of Dr. Sardis L. Crissey:

*Affidavit in support of Senate bill 1510, to pension Mrs. Susan M. Sessford.*

From about 1871 to 1885 I had charge of Bethany Mission Sunday School, situated at the corner of Thirteenth and C streets NW., it being a mission of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church. While there Mr. John H. Sessford, since deceased, and late husband of Susan M. Sessford, came to the school with his little grandson, whom he had taken to bring up. He came regularly for some time and sat in the infant class during the whole exercises, as the boy was bashful and wished him there. His life seemed bound up in the lad's life. They walked, ate, and slept together. In a few years the boy sickened and died. Out of Mr. Sessford's sorrow and grief came a new experience, which formed outward manifestation in his union with the church.

During the fall of 1888 Mr. Sessford was taken sick. He told me that his wages had been stopped, that he had no means, and needed assistance. I applied for and received aid from the church for his comfort and maintenance during his entire sickness. He died January 13, 1889. Before his decease he wished my promise that I would see that his wife was cared for. Mrs. Sessford received a small amount of life insurance, which, with her household effects (which she disposed of), provided her a support for some two years, as I recall. She then applied for help, which was granted. Having incidentally learned that she had a son, Thomas J. Martin, by her first husband, we called on him to support his mother. He said he could do so in part, but not entirely, as he was in debt, and had others depending on him for support. For some time our church and Mr. Martin contributed about equally to Mrs. Sessford's support. For about eighteen months before Mr. Martin's death, which occurred June 3, 1895, he had provided entirely for his mother's support.

Since his death the New York Avenue Church has been in part supporting her. She has \$10 per month cash from the church, and a stove was given her last fall, and clothing and food have been contributed as she has had need by the individual members of the church. She is now in her seventy-eighth year.

Mr. Sessford was captain of the first fire company organized in this District. He was an honorable, industrious man, a kind neighbor, and a worthy citizen.

SARDIS L. CRISSEY.

Witness:

CHARLES L. GURLEY.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a notary public in and for the District of Columbia, this 16th day of March, A. D. 1896.

[SEAL.]

CHARLES L. GURLEY,  
Notary Public, District of Columbia.

Your committee recommend the passage of the bill after being amended by striking out the words, in lines 11 and 12, "from the date of the decease of her son, the said Thomas J. Martin."

The bill is therefore reported back with the recommendation that it pass when amended as follows:

Strike out all of line 7 after the word "Martin."

Also strike out all of lines 8, 9, and 10.

From line 11 strike out "five, and that she be paid," and insert in lieu thereof the following: "late of Company D, Second Battalion, District of Columbia Infantry, and pay her a pension."